

SERVICE DATE – MARCH 31, 2015

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DECISION

Docket No. AB 290 (Sub-No. 318X)

NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY—ABANDONMENT
EXEMPTION—IN CRAWFORD COUNTY, GA.

Decided: March 30, 2015

Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) and Georgia Midland Railroad, Inc. (GMR), filed a joint notice of exemption under 49 C.F.R. pt. 1152 subpart F—Exempt Abandonments and Discontinuances of Service, for NSR to abandon, and for GMR to discontinue service over, a 5.06-mile portion of rail line (the Perry line), between milepost FV 90.44 and milepost FV 95.50, in Roberta, Crawford County, Ga. Notice of the exemptions was served and published in the Federal Register on November 23, 2010 (75 Fed. Reg. 71,487).¹ The exemptions became effective on December 23, 2010.

The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) served an environmental assessment (EA) in this proceeding on November 24, 2010. In the EA, OEA indicated that NSR and GMR had submitted an historic report as required under 49 C.F.R. § 1105.8(a) and had served the report on the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division (SHPO), pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 1105.8(c). In a June 21, 2010 reply to the historic report, the SHPO stated that there were no archaeological resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) that would be affected by the proposed abandonment (SHPO Project Reference No. GA-100611-005). The SHPO, however, requested additional information regarding two timber bridges on the line. According to OEA, NSR provided the additional information, and the SHPO concluded in a letter of June 24, 2010, that the line and the bridges should be considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The SHPO also concluded that removal of the bridges would result in an adverse effect on historic properties. Accordingly, in the EA, OEA recommended that a condition be imposed requiring NSR to retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all historic properties including sites, buildings, structures, and objects within the project right-of-way (the Area of Potential Effect) eligible for listing or listed in the National Register until completion of the Section 106 process. Accordingly, by decision served on December 22, 2010, the recommended condition was imposed as recommended by OEA.²

¹ The notice embraced Georgia Midland Railroad, Inc.—Discontinuance of Service Exemption—in Crawford County, Ga, Docket No. AB-1059X.

² Also in the EA, OEA indicated that the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) advised that two geodetic station markers had been identified that could be affected by the proposed

In a supplemental final environmental assessment dated February 9, 2015, OEA states that NSR provided the SHPO with the requested documentation on January 9, 2015. In a letter dated February 3, 2015, the SHPO states that it has reviewed the permanent archival record of the bridges and has concluded that the documentation supplied by NSR is adequate mitigation for the adverse effects associated with the proposed abandonment.

OEA recommends that the Section 106 condition imposed in the December 22, 2010 decision be removed. Accordingly, the proceeding will be reopened and the previously imposed historic preservation condition will be removed.

This decision will not significantly affect either the quality of the human environment or the conservation of energy resources.

It is ordered:

1. The proceeding is reopened.
2. The Section 106 historic preservation condition imposed in the December 22, 2010 decision is removed.
3. This decision is effective on its service date.

By the Board, Rachel D. Campbell, Director, Office of Proceedings.

abandonment. OEA recommended that a condition be imposed requiring NSR to consult with NGS and notify NGS at least 90 days prior to beginning salvage activities that could disturb or destroy the station markers. That condition was also imposed in the December 22, 2010 decision and remains in effect.